



PROTECTING PASSENGERS/DRIVERS

Safety Belt Facts

“It’s the Law” (T.C.A. 55-9-602, 55-9-603)

No person shall operate a passenger motor vehicle in the State of Tennessee unless such person and all passengers four (4) years through fifteen (15) years of age are restrained by a safety belt at all times the vehicle is in forward motion.



Remember, the safety value of seat belts is measured by their use. **DON'T BE FOUND DEAD SITTING ON YOUR SEAT BELT!**

Children are further protected by the law, which makes the driver responsible for their protection through age fifteen (15). If the child is under the age of four (4), the child must be properly seated in a child passenger restraint system meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards. Once the child is four years old, he or she must be buckled up, either in standard seat belts or an approved child-restraint system. Tennessee law further requires every occupant sixteen (16) years through seventeen (17) years of age to wear a safety belt throughout the vehicle. Failure to comply could result in a \$20.00 fine.

The Belted Driver Has Better Control of the Car

The belt holds the driver in the driving position designed to give maximum comfort and maximum control of the car.

Belts tend to reduce fatigue. The belted driver stays more alert.

The belt keeps the driver “in the driver’s seat.” The belted driver is better able to deal with emergencies and avoid more serious trouble.

Any passenger motor vehicle manufactured or assembled in 1969 or later must be equipped with seat belts and they must be in good usable condition for both applicant and examiner.

Some people still have “*bad information*” about using safety belts. For example:

“*Safety belts can trap you inside a car.*” It takes less than a second to undo a safety belt. Crashes where a vehicle catches fire or sinks in deep water and you are “trapped,” seldom happen. Even if they do, a safety belt may keep you from being “knocked out.” Your chance to escape will be better if you are conscious.

“*Safety belts are good on long trips, but I do not need them if I am driving around town.*” Over half of all traffic deaths happen within 25 miles of home. Many of them occur on roads posted at less than 45 m.p.h.

“*Some people are thrown clear in a crash and walk away with hardly a scratch.*” Your chances of not being killed in an accident are much better if you stay inside the vehicle. Safety belts can keep you from being thrown out of your vehicle, into the path of another one.

“*If I get hit from the side, I am better off being thrown across the car; away from the crash point.*” When a vehicle is struck from the side, it will move sideways. Everything in the vehicle that is not fastened down, including the passengers, will slide toward the point of crash, not away from it.

In an accident, the belted driver is much more likely to survive uninjured.

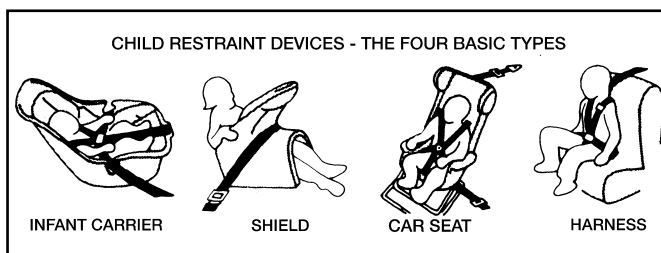
Ejection (being thrown from the car) greatly increases the chance of death or serious injury. Safety belts virtually eliminate ejection. The belted driver stays inside the car often protected from injury.

Safety belts reduce the possibility of injury from “hostile” surfaces inside the car (steering wheel, dashboard, windshield, controls, etc.). Even if the belted driver does collide with some of these surfaces, they do so with much less force and are often spared more serious injury.

The belted driver is less likely to be stunned or rendered unconscious by the accident and is better able to cope with the situation.

Child Passenger Protection

Tennessee cared enough about its children to become the first State in the country to pass a Child Passenger Protection Law. This law requires that any person transporting a child under the age of four (4) years in a motor vehicle upon a road, street, or highway in Tennessee shall be responsible for protecting the child and properly using a child passenger restraint system meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards.



Remember, holding a child in your lap, even if you have on your seat belt, does not protect the child. In fact, your own body weight in an impact could add serious damage to the child.

By promoting child passenger safety, Tennessee attempts to protect its most precious resource from needless death and injury. Why needless? The proper use of child-restraint devices could prevent **nine out of ten deaths** and **eight out of ten serious injuries** to child passengers under the age of four. Unfortunately, many of these needless injuries result in

permanent disabilities such as paralysis, brain damage, epilepsy, etc.

Think about what your child sees you do in the car. Do you wear your safety belt? Children follow their parents' example. Set a good example and remember you want to stay alive to share the beautiful years of your child's growth. There have been studies conducted that show children's behavior in the car improves when they learn how to ride in their child-restraint device and it becomes habit. Make it a habit for your child.



The Number-One Killer and Crippler Of Young Children Is Motor Vehicle Crashes.

Tips for Using Seat Belts With Small Children

When your child "graduates" from the child-resistant system to seat belts, it is very important for the belts to lie across the correct area of the child's body. Always remember "Belts to Bones". The pelvic bone and the collar bone should bear the pressure of the seat belts. If the safety belt system seems to ride up too high on the child's stomach or the shoulder harness lays across the face or neck area of the child, you should continue to use a booster seat or one of the many models of high back booster seats that incorporate the vehicle's existing safety belt system.

Put children in their place — in child-restraint devices or seat belts!

Other Child Passenger Protection Laws

It is now not only common sense, but against the law to allow children under the age of twelve to ride in the bed of a pickup truck. The only exceptions are (1) when the vehicle is being used in an organized parade, procession, or other ceremonial event, or (2) when the vehicle is being used for agricultural purposes, or (3) in certain local areas where children over age six who are not yet 12 years old are in vehicles travelling on local streets or roads. Even with these exceptions, if a child under the age of six is in the pickup truck bed, the vehicle must travel 20 miles per hour or less.

Air Bag Safety

Air bags can save your life. There have been over 800,000 air bag deployments, and at least 1,500 people have survived serious crashes, thanks to air bags. However, kids and air bags simply don't mix. Several children have been killed by a deploying air bag. In many cases, the child was not properly buckled, unbuckled, "out of position," or the child was in a rear-facing infant seat.

An important item to remember is that an air bag is not a soft, billowy pillow. Air bags were developed to prevent occupants from striking the steering wheel or dashboard. The air bag deploys and immediately deflates — faster than the blink of an eye. Air bags **combined with** safety belts are the most effective protection currently available in a car or truck.

If you drive a vehicle with a driver-side air bag, you should sit about a foot away from the steering wheel to allow the air bag to inflate. Pedal extenders can be used to achieve this distance.

Here are some points to ponder:

- Children 12 and younger should always ride in the back seat, properly buckled up.
- Infants in rear-facing seats should NEVER be placed in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger-side air bag.
- Infants should be properly restrained in the back seat.
- If a child must ride in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger-side airbag, the seat should be moved back as far as possible, and the child should be properly buckled.

For more information: Call the Office of Highway Safety at (615) 741-2589.

Or look for information on the Internet:
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/airbag.html>

Summary

1. Drivers must always buckle up, even with air bags.
2. All front-seat passengers must buckle up.
3. Children 4 through 15 must be either buckled up or in an approved child-restraint system. They are safest in the back seat.
4. Children under the age of 4 must be in an approved child-restraint system.
5. Children under the age of 12 are not permitted to ride in the bed of a pickup truck, with only the three exceptions discussed above.
6. Don't rely on air bags alone.

The safety message is as easy to remember as your ABC's.

Air Bag Safety:
Buckle Everyone!
Children In Back!

Protect the One YOU Love!